



[NUMBER 2,164.]

THE ANTICS OF JACKIE AND SAMMY, THE TWINS, AND UNCLE TOM, THE MENAGERIE MAN

[NOVEMBER 7, 1931.]



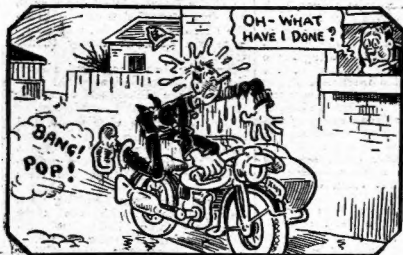
1. "No fireworks till to-night, lads—I want a snooze!" chirped the twins in double-width tones. "Ah! But no noise till to-night, lads!" chuckled Uncle Tom. "I want a snooze." "Right—ba, bunk!" laughed Jackie and Sammy. "We won't breathe aloud!"



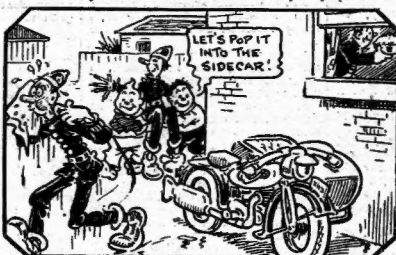
2. But no sooner had the merry old zoo-minder settled down to slide into slumberland than the piece of peace was punctured in about seventeen different places. "Bang! Zimp! Pop! Ow!" They've started their fireworks already!" yelled Tom.



3. "And that's how they obey their old nunky, is it? Orrr! I'll teach the young rips that what I say goes!" Whereupon he grabbed up a bucket of dampness and taught that to go, too—straight through the window! "Hold that!" he yelled.



4. "That'll stop your fireworks!" But as a matter of fact it stopped old Policeman Fairyfoot's features, 'cos they happened to be coming along—complete with Fairy—just outside! "Gork! It wasn't fireworks, after all!" gasped old Tom.



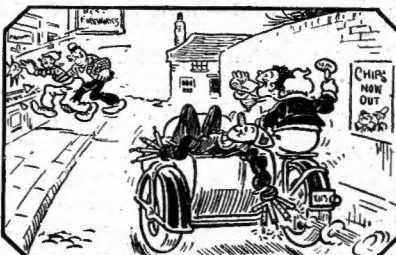
5. "It was that old blower-bike of Fairy's. What a noise!" "Owah! Gug-uggle!" spluttered Fairy. "I'm soaked!" snorted the pride of the bobby brigade, as he flowed off to have his collar-stud dry-cleaned. "It annoys me no end, it does!"



6. Now Jackie and Sammy shuffled up with a lifelike guy of Fairy just then, and when the old zoo-minder popped out of the window again with a pie he thought it was his police pal. "Sorry I soaked you, Fairy!" he clucked. "Take this!"



7. "Ta mussy, nunky," chirped Sammy. "Now we can have a 'blow-out' as well as our guy. He'll have his with squibs!" "Yes. Our guy forks out!" tittered Jackie. "Hey! Bring that pie back—it's not for you, you scallwags!" hooted old Tom.



8. "Beg pudden, unk, but we like pie!" chuckled the twins as they broke into a nice buzz-off. Only just ahead there happened to be a brace of bad lads breaking into a firework shop. "We'll make things go with a bang!" they yammered.



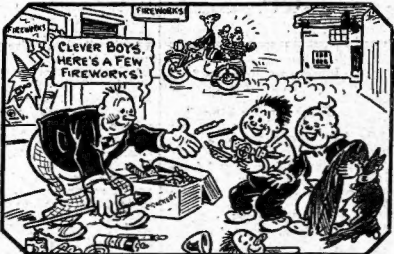
9. But something else was going with a bang. Yes. The exhaust on the blower-bike was making several "reports" about itself, and just as a spark from this set fire to the squibs in that guy, Jackie made the sidecar feel upset by going over a stone.



10. "Coo! Our guy's done a guy!" snickered Sammy. "Ay! It's fallen out!" quoth Jackie. "And by the look of it those chaps are falling out with it, too!" For no sooner did the guy of Fairy fall on the firework scumpers than off went the squibs—



11. Which the motor-bike's exhaust had warned up. Bang! Pop! Crash! Korash! they went. "Yow-wow! Hellup! Stop shooting at us, Master Pleeceman!" yowled the bad lads. "W-w-we'll come quietly if you dud-dud-don't shoot again!"



12. "Well, pickle my chin-strap in treacle!" clucked Fairy, bowling up them. "You've caught a couple of bad lads, kids. I shall get promotion for this!" "And these lads shall have some fireworks!" quoth the shopkeeper. So all was swell!



They tell all the latest jokes.

"LATE again?"

"Why do you look at me like that?"

"When I do it spells trouble."

"What about it? Anybody can spell trouble."

"Well, perhaps so—but can you spell soup?"

"Here, how many 'p's' in soup?"

"Well, I don't know for sure, but my ma used to put a pennyworth in."

"My word, you do remind me of Sam Soft."

"But I haven't got a face like his."

"No, but you're soft."

"Thanks. But I say, you are like Felix Workinx."

"Not a bit. He's fair and I'm dark."

"Yes; and he owes me five bob, and you are like him because you owe me five bob, too."

"Ha, ha! That's a rich joke."

"I wish I was."

"You're a joke, anyway."

"All the same, I know the best way to catch rabbits."

"Share the secret."

"Seasy. Just at behind a hedge and make a noise like a lettuce leaf."

"Go on! You can't catch rabbits that way."

"Perhaps you are right—but I caught you, you old freak!"

"Silly parrot!"

"That's not so rude as you think. A parrot is a clever bird. It is the only dicker-dick that can talk."

"Don't you believe it. The peacock can talk."

"That's not true."

"Yes. It can unfold a fine 'tail,' can't it?"

"I'm told you're a bit of a fibber."

"Well, I can do much things better than most men. I'll wager you can't tell me anything you can't do that I couldn't do myself."

"Well, I can't pay my bills, and I'm delighted to hear that you can, old fruit."

"Hm, I take back what I said. Please don't remember it."

"Some people can't remember things. Their memory is destroyed, and I know what does it."

"What destroys memory?"

"Neither. It's lending a man money."

"Here, are you being rude at me?"

"Oh, no, fair sir!"

"How dare you address me like that?"

"Well, how I'd like to be dressed would be to be in a bathing-dress and in a fur coat all the winter."

"Of course. But everybody would like to do that. How would you like to spend all your winter in a bathing-dress and all the summer in a fur coat?"

"Ah, nobody does that?"

"Your mistake. A moth does."

"I'd give you a shilling for that joke if I had a shilling."

"And if you gave it to me it would be a bad one, I guess."

"Ah, shillings don't go far these days."

"Of course they do. Just as far as they used to in our grandfather's time."

"Oh, dear no!"

"If you don't believe me, pop a shilling in an envelope and send it by post. It will go quite as far."

"How many letters are there in money?"

"Easy. There are five letters."

"Then how is it if you take two letters from money you only have 'one' left?"

"That I cannot tell. But I know a chap who took money from two letters and he didn't get anything left."

"Oh, what did he get?"

"Two months in prison."

TOODLE-OO

ATHRILLING COMPLETE STORY OF DIGBY GRANT, THE FAMOUS DETECTIVE.

The Peril at Ten

CLANG! Clang! Clang!

As the unmistakable sound of a fire-bell rang out, Digby Grant instinctively slowed down the car he was driving and drove in to the kerb.

A moment later the thunder of the heavy motor fire-engine's wheels broke out on the cobble-stoned road, and with the insistent note of its big brass bell echoing harshly between the houses on either side of the street it roared its way past the Scotland Yard detective car.

"Wonder where the fire is!" said Sam Smart, Grant's youthful assistant.

"Not more than a street or two away," replied Grant, whose sharp eye had detected a cloud of smoke rising against the black night sky some distance ahead. "We'll go and see what it is."

It turned out to be a small, old-fashioned house at the corner of a dingy little street, and by the time Digby Grant and Sam had succeeded in thrusting their way through the dense crowd of onlookers the top of the building was a veritable furnace.

"Is everybody out, officer?" asked Grant of a burly policeman who was standing to hold back the swarming crowd.

"Nobody's lived in the place for a year," was the short reply.

Grant nodded. Then, accompanied by Sam, he made his way round to the side of the house to view the back of it.

"A real sizzler, isn't it?" remarked Sam.

Before Grant could reply, an alarming thing happened.

From out of a small upper window in the side of the burning house flew an object, and as it crashed down almost at Grant's feet the astonished detective saw that it was a small wooden stool.

"Gosh! How did that happen?" gasped Sam, in astonishment.

"I'm going to find out!" replied Grant grimly.

Before his young assistant could make any further comment, Digby Grant made a dash round to the front. Then, ignoring the warning shouts of the firemen and police, he dived through the open front door.

A rickety flight of stairs faced him, and without hesitation he bounded up them.

Lurid tongues of flame licked greedily about his legs, and huge volumes of dense black smoke swirled about him till his senses reeled. But his bright blaze moment-arily dispersed the smoke before him, and in that brief instant the detective saw a door.

Plunging through the flames, he hunched himself at it, got under its weight, and as he staggered into the small attic-like apartment, he saw an astonishing sight.

An overturned table lay blazing furiously on the floor with the skeleton remains of what had once been a large oil-lamp beside it. And there in the centre of the blazing inferno lay the figure of a man, bound and gagged.

The floorboards around him were a mass of leaping hissing flames, and as Grant plunged through the fire towards him the man's eyes flickered open in a brief instant.

Snatching him up from the blazing boards, Grant swiftly whipped off the grubby cloth tied across his mouth.

"It's all right; I've got you safe now!" he cried.

"Too-too late!" gasped the other weakly. "The—The Santa Marco—ten o'clock! They—"

But here his last remaining vestige of strength gave out. With a groan his head sank on to his chest, and he drooped limp in Grant's arms.

He was a man of heavy build, and it required all Grant's strength to drag him across to the open door. But here he found himself faced with an impenetrable barrier of smoke and flame.

Seeing that way of escape was cut off, Grant staggered back, with his burden across the room to the window. The glass had long since been broken by the intense heat, and, leaning through the smoulder-



In the midst of the roaring angry flames lay a man, bound and gagged.

ing frame, he waved his one free hand to the awe-stricken crowd below.

In a moment a fire-escape was hoisted up to the side-street, and a minute later Digby Grant, scorched and smoke-grimed, brought his burden safely to the ground.

"Thank goodness you're safe, guv'nor!" gasped Sam Smart, running up to his chief. "How had that poor chap got into the house?"

"That's what I'm anxious to find out," replied Grant, wiping some of the grime off his face with his handkerchief. "I must speak to him again! Ah, here's a doctor!"

But the hastily summoned medical man immediately dashed Grant's hopes after he had examined the victim.

"He will be unconscious for several hours," he announced, in reply to the detective's question. "He must go to hospital at once."

A police-ambulance was already on the spot, and without delay the unconscious man was gently lifted into it. As it drove away, Grant turned to Sam.

"Let's get back to the car!" he muttered. "We've work to do."

Seeing the puzzled look on his assistant's face the detective briefly explained what he had found up in the blazing house.

"But it's what the fellow said that mystifies me," concluded Grant. "His words were: 'The Santa Marco; ten o'clock.'"

"Rotumy!" remarked Sam. "What sort of a chap was he?"

"By the tattoo marks on his arms, and the lucky charm he was wearing round his neck, he should say he was a seafaring man," replied Grant shrewdly. "In fact, it wouldn't surprise me if the Santa Marco isn't a boat."

"We'll go down to the river and make some inquiries."

A short drive in the car down narrow and grim streets presently brought them within sight of the sluggish, unwelcome-looking waters of the Thames.

Several big boats lay at anchor, gently rising and falling on the flood tide, and numerous lights flickered across the waters.

For the moment the wharfed side seemed dead, with the exception of a stocky old seaman shuffled into view of the misty gloom, and Grant approached him.

"Excuse me," he said, "but do you have a boat named the Santa Marco?"

"Santa Marco?" repeated the old seaman, screwing up his weather-beaten face in thought. "Why, yes," he said, after a pause. "That's old Ben Davis' tug. It's down by Draker's Wharf."

"Thanks," said Grant. "And what's Ben Davis like? Is he a heavy-set, well-clothesed, curly-haired man with a scar over his left eye?"

"That's right; that's old Ben," replied the other.

"Ah! Then I know him," nodded the detective. "Thanks! Good-night!"

With that he turned and hurried away into the gloom with Sam Smart at his side.

Was that Ben Davis who resembled the man who had told Sam as they plunged into the dark, dank-smelling alleyway.

"Yes," answered Grant, "he must have been imprisoned in that house"

by somebody who is going to do something aboard his tug, the Santa Marco, to-night. Ten o'clock was the hour named—and hark—"

He broke off abruptly, listening intently as the chiming of a distant clock floated faintly but clearly across the oily expanse of water before them.

"Ten o'clock!" breathed Sam.

"Yes. We haven't a moment to lose!" exclaimed Grant, breaking into a run. "This is Draker's Wharf just ahead!"

There were several barges and one or two small boats moored so close to the big wooden piles which thrust their heads above the calm waters, like grim sentinels of the night.

But of a tug there was no sign at first. Then suddenly the busy chug-chug-chugging sound of a tug broke in upon the soft lapping of the water against the wharfed side.

A moment later a small steam tug came into view. One thing about it instantly struck Grant as being suspicious. Not a single light showed on the vessel as it nosed its way through the other craft, and just behind it was a motor-launch in which two figures could dimly be seen.

Then, as Grant and Sam eagerly watched, from the deep shadows they saw the man who had been steering the tug suddenly leave the wheel and take a flying leap into the following motor-boat.

And even as this astonishing act took place, the port light of another vessel gleamed for a brief instant on the passing tug's bows.

It was the Santa Marco.

What was their game, guv'nor?" murmured Sam.

"I've got to find that out," replied the detective grimly. "That tug hasn't been deserted for nothing. You keep a watch on those birds in the motor-launch. I must hard the Santa Marco!"

Breaking from the shadows, Digby Grant raced as fast as he could along to where he had seen the long arm of a crane jutting out over the water.

With the agility of a trained athlete, he hauled himself up the big iron girder supporting the crane-arm. Then, scrambling up like a cat, he saw that SARGA THE STRONG and SECRETS OF DARKMOOR will be more popular than any—yes, even that old and firm favourite The Red Rover.

But you mustn't think that I'm trying to boast, in spite of the fact that I have been Editor of the world's most famous comic for so many years.

He was not a moment too soon, for the Santa Marco was already passing, its engine still chugging evenly as it blindly made its way down the river.

With a daring leap, Grant left the end of the crane-arm, and the next instant he landed on the little deck at the stern of the tug.

He paused for a moment before making his way below to investigate, and as his keen gaze swept the river ahead he saw something which gave him a clue to the mystery.

Directly ahead, about fifty yards farther on, were four large ugly-looking vessels. They were oil-tankers, Grant realised. Each one probably contained several thousand gallons of oil—and the Santa Marco had obviously been directed straight at them. Why?

With a suspicion of the truth in his mind Grant gave a bound, and sprang down the short flight of wooden steps to the stuffy little cabin.

An ominous ticking sounded in the darkness, and as the electric pocket-lamp about him, he saw an object on the floor which made even his steel-like nerves tingle.

It was a large explosive machine, timed to explode at an appointed moment. And as Grant gazed at the clock-like dial in the top of it he saw the single hand creeping towards the red mark which would explode it.

There was barely half a minute to go!

Snatching up the infernal machine, Grant turned and raced up the short flight of stairs. He tripped on the last step, and his head and neck fell.

But with an effort he saved himself, and staggering to the stern of the tug he hurled the vicious machine into the water.

Almost as he did so the tug gave a violent jerk as its bow ran into the first of the fleet of tankers, and as Digby Grant pitched down on to the deck a muffled explosion broke the silence of the night, sending up a spray of water nearly twenty feet high.

Had the bomb remained aboard the tug the explosion would have spread to the tankers and an appalling disaster would have followed.

But the tankers were saved, and by the time the detective had managed to turn the Santa Marco about the shrill blast of a police-whistle rang out from the river bank.

It was Sam Smart, putting up a desperate fight with the three scoundrels who had just disembarked from the motor-launch.

Sam cried, "Grant, putting the tug straight at the wharf."

A moment later he was beside his staunch young assistant, and after a brief fight the three crooks were marched off by the police.

The three men had deliberately attempted to fire the fleet of oil-tankers, and Ben Davis, the tug skipper, had been made a prisoner for that they could make use of the tug. When the crooks came up for trial later, they divulged the fact that they had been hired to do the dastardly act by the ruthless owner of a rival oil company.

And, needless to say, he, as well as the three hired crooks, got the punishment he deserved.

(Digby Grant is the terror of the lawless. His adventures are the finest appearing in any paper comic, and his ONLY COMIC CUTS.)

It is true that I have tried to give my readers exactly the sort of stories they like most, but I should like a shilling if I didn't tell you that I have always been greatly helped by suggestions which have come from my readers.

So if there is any sort of story you would like to see in Comic Cuts I hope you will send me a postcard and tell me what that sort of story is.

Remember that Comic Cuts is the first and only comic, and I intend to make sure that it shall remain more popular than any other comic. That is why I am always thinking of fresh things for my readers, though I think you will agree that in its present form it takes a lot of beating.

I would advise you not to miss one single issue of Comic Cuts from now, because it is going to be packed full with wonderful pictures and stories.

Your old pal,

CLARENCE CUTS.

7-11-31



COMIC CUTS OFFICE, The Fitzroy House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

DEAR READERS,—Many thanks for the letters I have had from readers saying how much they like the new stories that are running in the King of Comics.

Although there have been many successful stories in the past, I am sure that SARGA THE STRONG and SECRETS OF DARKMOOR will be more popular than any—yes, even that old and firm favourite The Red Rover.

But you mustn't think that I'm trying to boast, in spite of the fact that I have been Editor of the world's most famous comic for so many years.

Secrets of Darkmoor

Old Michael, the Hermit of the Moor, tells the tale of THE WILD WOLF CALL.

The Needle of Rock.

I HAVE sat in my cave in the rocks on Darkmoor and have heard the wild ponies neigh from far away. At nights I have lain and heard the owls call and the wind whine and whistle and groan like a human being. Once when I was out on the open moor a storm burst and a thunder-bolt fell from the sky and shattered its way into the earth with a sudden sound that almost stopped my heart beating, and made me deaf for well over a week. That frightened me, and I shall remember it for many years to come.

But I shall never, never forget the night I was sitting by my fire in my cave with Laddie, my dog, stretched out at my side, and I heard the wolf call.

I was sure that was what it was. Once before, when I had been out in Canada in the heart of the snows, I had heard the wolves call out in wild hunger, and then and now the blood froze in my veins.

Wolves in England! I had never heard of such a thing before, and yet I was sure it was the wolf call I had heard. To prove it, there was Laddie quivering by the fire, the hair on his back standing up in fright, his ears back along his head, his cold nose quivering.

We listened in silence, and I must confess I jumped when my fire suddenly crackled loudly.

Then in a minute or two I heard the wolf call again.

There was no mistaking it. The wolf call is a long, high wailing sound, cruel, wild, and merciless like the hungry wolves themselves.

Over the moor it came, and the noise was about to die away to silence when suddenly it altered and became savage and menacing. I knew what that excited note meant; they were on the hunt.

Quickly I jumped up and got my stoutest stick, for a sudden, horrible thought had struck me. Perhaps they had seen my cave and were coming to the cave.

I hurried out on the S-shaped passage entrance to my cave anxious to see if I could see the wolves.

Outside, I found the moon bathed in moonlight, for it was a full moon, and there was not a cloud in the sky. A heavy frost lying on stick and stone and tree, threw back the moonlight in a million sparkling points of light, each one as brilliant as a jewel.

There was beauty on the moor, but just then came the wolf call to remind me that there was danger, too.

Down on the moor, quite a way away, I saw a man running across a field of moorland. At first I could not see what he was running from, although I could guess. The next moment I knew my guess was right, because out into the same field of moorland a dog sprang, a silver-grey streak—wolves!

Laddie, beside me, whimpered uneasily.

"Home, boy," I said, and he leaped at my feet and went. He was not a coward, but I am sure he was glad I did not want him to come with me. I would have liked his company, but it would not have been fair to tempt a dog at such a chance against a wolf in a tooth-and-nail fight.

Leaving Laddie in charge of our home, I ran down from the ledge and away across the moor. I am not so young as I was, but I am well and healthy, and can keep up a good pace for quite a long while.

I must have been running faster than any of them in front, because, presently, when I came to a piece of higher ground, I was able to see the wolves and the man in a valley below.

I was toiling up the far slope of the valley, with the beasts leaping after him. Half-way up this slope the grass ended and bare rocky ground began.



With the long drop beneath the man turned at bay. One after the other the wolves sprang like leaping demons.

Beyond the rocky slope there rose up one giant head of rock, and the man made for this.

"Don't go up there!" I shouted out to him, but he did not hear me, and so began to climb up. My heart sank because I knew that he would be caught on the needle. The wolves would go up after him, and they were sure to catch him because the only way down was the way he was going up. The far side of the needle was straight and smooth, like the wall of a house. Right down at the bottom, as far down as the valley on my side, there ran a rock-bedded river, but there was no way of getting down to it, except by jumping.

And that would be a death jump! The man was doomed!

He went on climbing up and up, kicking out at all the loose rocks. More than once all the wolves were bowled over by the tumbling rocks, but never so badly that they could not get up again and continue the chase.

I saw him begin to climb round the rock with the idea of getting down the far side, and I heard the cry of despair he gave when he saw the slippery side beneath him.

One of the wolves leapt at him, and I lost sight of him behind that silvery shape. But he fought that beast off somehow or other, and clambered up a few feet higher. He found a ledge there to stand on, and I saw him standing, a dark shape against the moon.

One after the other the wolves sprang, like leaping demons. Three of them the man beat off with his bare hands, but the fourth beast took him unawares and got a grip with his teeth on his coat.

The man snatched it above his head and turned at bay. Another grey form streaked upwards at him, and he staggered weakly, and then fell backwards out of view behind the needle of rock.

The wolf that went with him howled in terror, and the animals who were left on the rock were suddenly silent. It was hard to believe that only a few seconds before the air had rung with the blood-mad howls of the savage brute.

I put my hands up and covered my ears as I thought of the sharp pointed rocks sticking up out of the stream below and waiting for the falling man and beast.

Up on the needle the animals were moving uneasily to and fro and looking down the slippery side of the needle. They seemed to be getting anxious and uneasy.

"As though something is escaping them," I thought to myself. Then it struck me that perhaps after all the man might still be alive. Calling myself a fool for not thinking of that earlier, I turned back and took a path that

would bring me to the river out of sight of the wolves.

I ran with all my might, and it was only a minute or two later that I reached the stream.

Coming down on the current, invisible and at the mercy of the waters, was the man who had jumped from the rock.

I waded into the water and pulled him ashore. He was still breathing, thank Heaven, but there was no time to stop and see what was the matter with him. I could only sling him across my shoulder and start out for the cave, hoping that the wolves would not scent me. I knew enough about the moor to choose a route that would keep me out of their sight.

But hunger must have made their scent keener than usual.

I had not gone very far when I heard them whine again, and I knew for certain they had found my track and were following it hot foot.

There was no need for me to hide now. I could safely take the straightest, quickest way home, and I took it.

From a piece of high ground I looked back and saw them coming after me.

"You shan't have him!" I shouted at them defiantly.

They answered me with a chorus of savage howls, and I saw in the moonlight their glistening teeth and dripping jaws. I ran on madly as I had never run before. The man on my shoulder would keep slipping down my back a little, and every now and then I had to slow down to hoist him up again.

It sickened me to see how quickly the wolves were catching me up. I shouted at them foolish threats and wild defiance, wasting precious breath that I badly needed to fill my bursting lungs. It was a nightmare race.

I was tempted to stop and fight them and get the satisfaction of crushing my boot into their lean, cruel faces. All the same, I ran on because I knew there would be no hope of escape if I stopped now with my helpless burden.

I could not help wondering what hope there could possibly be, even if I did reach my cave in safety. It looked as though the place where I had lived would soon become my grave!

The Sleigh!

AS I ran I fixed my eyes on the mouth of the cave, but I could not forget the wolves and the man at my heels. They would not let me forget them with their wild cries.

At last I was pounding up the slope leading to my ledge outside the cave. Laddie must have been listening or watching, because suddenly he came out of the cave like a streak of lightning. He might have been afraid of the wolves before, but now

he didn't care, and went past me and straight at the throat of the nearest one.

As I darted into the cave-mouth I caught a glimpse of Laddie shaking the life out of one wolf.

In the cave I put the man down on the ground, but not as gently as I should have done. I had no time to waste, because I had suddenly thought of a plan all in a flash.

I knew wolves were afraid of fire, so I began to make one in the mouth of the cave, piling up wood from a corner into a large heap. This I lit and blew madly at the flame until it flared up. The wood crackled, and the flames spread quickly.

"Laddie, Laddie!" I called.

"Here, boy, here."

From outside there came a chorus of snarls and animal cries. I was just going to my old pal's help if it was not too late, when he came leaping over the fire through the flames and smoke.

Landing at my feet, he turned and faced the cave-mouth. He was bleeding in a dozen places, and was so tired he could scarcely stand, but he growled as furiously as ever, and was ready to continue the fight.

"Good boy!" I told him, and piled up the fire.

Of the wolves there was no sign. I guessed they were waiting up at the other end of the S passage, wondering what to do.

"Watch, Laddie!" I said to my pal, and he crouched down with his head resting along his outstretched paws. It was the attitude of sleep, but I knew that he would keep awake for days unless I told him to move.

Now was my chance to see to the man I had brought in.

By some miracle he had escaped without breaking a bone, although one ankle was so badly sprained and bruised that it would be days before he would be able to walk.

While I was examining him he came to, and looked about him wonderingly. Then suddenly he remembered the horror of his last conscious moments, and he clutched me and looked round him with a choking cry.

"It's all right," I told him. "You are quite safe here. The wolves cannot get you."

"They attacked me while I was out walking across the moor," he said. "Where are they now?"

"Outside," I told him. "But they won't come in because they are frightened of the fire."

I could not help wondering, though, what would happen when I had no more wood left in the cave to put on the fire.

After I had seen that Laddie and the man were asleep I sat and spent the long hours keeping the fire in.

Beyond the fire I presently saw a circle of eyes, and knew that the wolves had crept in the dark and were watching me. I threw a lighted brand at the gleaming circle. There was a frightful snarl, and as the wolves scattered. A yelp and the smell of singed fur told me I had hit one of them.

But for all that the circle of eyes was there again a few minutes later, and not once all that night did they go away.

Slowly the new day dawned, and I awoke to find the man breakfasting and the man said he wondered if the wolves were still there. I, who had seen them all night, knew that they were still prisoners.

All that day we had to keep the fire going, but I was able to get a little sleep, although not so much as I would have liked, because the man's snoring and the sound that I had to keep on bathing it with water.

And so the second day passed until night-time came, and I settled down to watch the eyes of the wolves again and to think of something to get us out of our terrible position.

I alone knew that there was wood in the cave to last us for only half the next day, no food at all, and only a very little water to drink.

That night again the circle of eyes watched me out of the darkness. I cursed at the wolves in a low voice, and threw flaming firewood after them. But what a waste it was, because they came creeping back again a moment or two after the fire was closed.

I gave up throwing wood at them, and just stared at them.

The smoke from the wood fire blew into my eyes and made them smart, and to ease them I sat with my eyes closed.

I must have been tired out, because unknown to myself I must have fallen asleep.

Suddenly, some time later, I woke with a horrible feeling of danger. The fire was almost out! The eyes of the wolves were terribly near. It was only the last red

embers of the fire that had stopped the creatures from springing at us and making that sleep our last sleep of all.

I flung wood on the fire and stirred the embers. Almost at once the flames shot up, and back and back went the circle of eyes as the fire drove the shadows back to the entrance of the cave and away.

I went to sleep no more that night, but sat and remembered how near the wolves must have been, and tried to think of some way of getting rid of them long enough to allow us to escape from the cave.

And at last I had an idea which I tried as soon as it was light and Laddie and our visitor were awake.

The ledge outside the cave ran downhill to the left and uphill to the right, until it came to a sudden stop in mid-air. It was possible to climb over the top edge of the ledge and down on to one below.

The main ledge and that little one below were like the top two steps of a flight of stairs, but there were no more steps below, only a sheer drop to the moor.

"I'm just going to see if the wolves are still there," I said to the man, because there was no need to tell him that I might never come back if my scheme went wrong.

Laddie whined uneasily, and tried to stop my going and stop me. He knew the wolves were still there, and hated me going.

As quietly as I could I crept along the S passage until I came to the last ledge. Then I took a deep breath and jumped out on to the ledge.

The animals were there in the grey dawn light, crouching like dogs and watching the entrance. They leapt at their feet when I saw me, and before they had quite got over their surprise I had jumped clean over one of them and was racing up the ledge of rock to the right.

It was a desperate race, like lightning, and I shouted and yelled to excite them and make them chase me blindly.

But there was one thing I must beware of: the animals must not catch me up.

I caught my breath, for they were getting perilously near. The ledge sloped up my way, but there I had thought, although I knew it well, and with every step I was moving slower and slower.

I nerved myself for one last effort.

As the end of the ledge came nearer I spurred, and was going my fastest when I came to the edge.

I took one leap over and began to descend. My head rose up into my mouth as I looked down and saw the second ledge. My plan was to land on that, but I had a sudden thought that I had jumped so far out that I could not stop.

I was not worried. I landed safely on it, although every bone in my body felt as though it was broken by the fall.

The next moment as I crouched on the lower ledge I looked up and saw the wolves come leaping out over the end of the top ledge.

They were on their hairy stomachs and the underneath of their long jaws and lolling tongues as they went over me.

But their madness had gone too far, and were dropping down beyond my second ledge.

They seemed to sense they had been tricked, and one snarled at me as he dropped helplessly past in mid-air.

They had all jumped out so far that nothing could save them.

The man and I went on, until they crashed to the ground below.

Never have I wished an animal harm or pain, but I thanked Heaven when I looked down and saw that none of them moved after their terrible fall.

Slowly I climbed back to the upper ledge and went back to the cave. I knew that the adventure was over.

When I had gathered more wood and stored water and got food I went and looked at the wolves, and saw that they were wolf dogs.

I guessed that they must have strayed some time before from their homes in one of the towns on the edge of the moor, and as time had gone on had grown wild and hungry and strangely like the wolves from whom they had descended.

I buried them in a shallow grave, and marked the spot with a pile of stones.

I can never pass that spot without thinking of the wolf call I heard one night and the silvery shapes seeking their prey in the moonlight.

(From "The Fastest of Adventures the Hermit told each week tell you a tale that is sure to thrill.")

HEAP BIG-BEEF THE INDIAN CHIEF



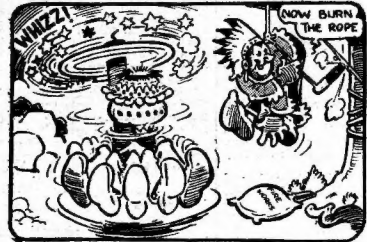
1. As our cheery chief was toddling home one Indian Firework Thursday someone dropped him a line. "Got you, Beefy!" chirped Rube Ropen, the lasso expert.



2. Rube's next move took our lad right off his feet, and he was left to suppose up a tree. "You hang up there," smirked Rube. "I'll borrow these fireworks."



3. But as it looked like rain the cowboy rigged up a gamp with a catharine wheel and cracker. "So long!" he piped. "Pip-pip!" Then Beefy got busy with his pipe—



4. And in two ticks Rube was doing himself a few good turns underneath the catharine wheel. "Hee-hee! Heap big burning shame," said Beefy, burning the rope.

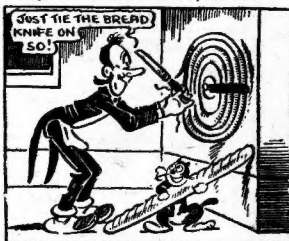


5. And off went our rollicking Redskin with his bag of fireworks, leaving Rube in a daze that'd last for days. "Plenty good display, cowboy!" he chuckled.

WADDLES THE WHIMSICAL WAITER



1. "No loading about there with those fireworks, my lad," barked old Rissole, the boss, to Waddles, last Bonfire Day. "Get busy, and carve this loaf up at once."



2. "Suppose I'd better have a cut at it!" sighed Waddles. But so as to combine business with pleasure, he nailed up that overgrown catharine wheel on the wall.



3. "Where there's a wheel there's a way," he smiled, setting fire to it. "Just watch that knife, my dear sir—it's going to do me a few good turns, I guess!"

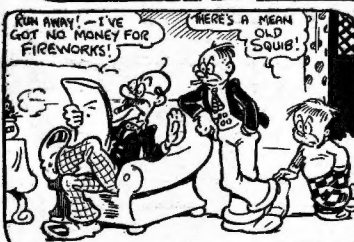


4. And as it whizzed round Waddles held the loaf in poish and soon had it neatly sliced up. "Hee-hee!" chuckled Rissole. "There's a few comic cuts about this!"



Uncle: "Do you always blow on your tea to cool it, Tommy?" Tommy: "Oh no, uncle! I usually fan it with my hat!"

COMIC CUTS—THE WORLD'S BEST COMIC. BIG BEN AND LITTLE LEN



1. "Fireworks?" perped pa to our prize pair. "Bah! And pish-tush! Catch me buying such things. They're out of date!" "Who said so?" sniffed Little Len. "They must be," quoth pa. "Guy Fawkes used them!"



2. "Well, if that misiny old misfit won't buy us any we'll make some!" breezed Big Boy Ben disgustedly. "Come on, Midge! Stuff some gunpowder into this last year's squib case." But pa spotted them on the job—



3. "Nunno! 'Cos, you see, a small dose of the doings had hoodled out of the bung-hole as pa paddled indoors. "Pur! Let's light our one-and-only one!" sniffed Len.



4. "Ah! But everything that goes up, comes down!" tootled the tall lad, fetching the family bedstead. "This is where we let pa down lightly—for half-a-crown."



5. "Ow! My face!" he trumpeted. "Corks! That was a bit of a drawback to our scheme!" tootled Ben. "Kinnamp, spring!" "Gerr! That cash is coming back to me now!" booted pa, collaring Len. "Hand over!"



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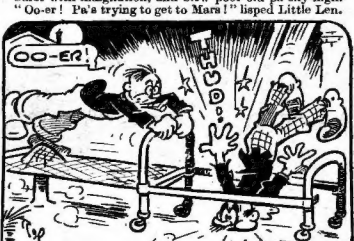
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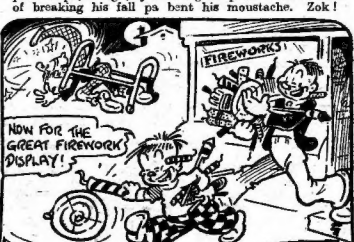
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JOE TROTTER THE JOVIAL HIKER



1. Old Farmer Fizzle was very cut-up when he spotted Tommy in the act of carving down a spot of firewood. "What do you think you're doing, eh?" he roared.



2. "Don't 'axe' me!" gasped Tommy. "But I think I'm doing a bunk—I don't like the look on your face." So saying, he did a hearty dash round and round the tree.



3. But old Fizzle followed in his footsteps, and also galloped round and round. "Phoo! This isn't my idea of a round of pleasure!" gasped Tom. "I'll stop him!"



4. And plonking the chopper in the tree, he stepped back and watched the farmer fall over it. Bonk! Just like that. "Good!" said Tommy. "Now I'll continue my trip!"



Doctor: "Dear me! I hear a strange buzzing noise!" Patient: "I'm not surprised. I've just swallowed a bee!"

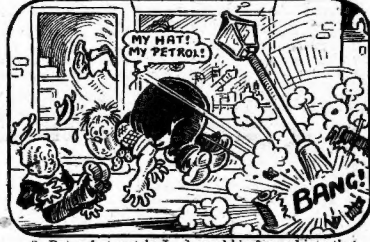
JOE GREASE THE JOLLY GARAGE MAN



1. "Please, mister," lisped a little lad in tearful tones to jolly old Joe, "that man in there just made me pay a penny for a ha'penny cracker. I've been robbed!"



2. "Oh, did he?" snorted Joe. "Well, if I'm bigger than he is I'll show him a thing or throe. Stand back, sonny—there's going to be a war on in a minute!"



3. But unfortunately Joe buzzed his fag-and-into that tin of best Smell petrol, and things went with a bang! "Cover!" gasped Joe. "Something's come arpus!"



4. And down flopped the lamp-post through the window of old Whizzbang's firework shop. "That's shed a little light on the subject," tittered Joe. "Bunk, sonny!"



5. And off they galloped and scoured a front seat at the firework show that followed. "Some guy!" chirped the lad, as the crackers made Whizzbang hop. 7-11-31

COMIC CUTS CINEMA



The RED ROVERS

The Story of the latest Fun and Thrill Adventures of the famous football team, not forgetting the mascots, Uncle Joe, the parrot, and William, the almost-human monkey.

Disaster.

IN a dim dungeon, under a forgotten old, tucked away in the heart of the vast, lonely moors which stretched away to the north of Tynecastle, six of the Red Rovers paced to and fro, pausing from time to time to peer through the small grating which allowed fresh air and a little daylight to enter their gloomy prison.

Three of them—Jack Steel, Dick Turner, and Ted Nelson—had been there nearly a week, and the other three—Charlie Richardson, Jim Baker, and Fred Martin—had been there a day less.

Again and again the lads went over the details of the amazing manner in which they had been kidnapped, trying to understand what it all meant, trying to discover who their enemies were.

The first three prisoners had been in an old car, which had broken down in a lonely part of the moor. They had set out to walk back to Tynecastle, when, as they were passing a big clump of gorse-bushes, masked men jumped on them from behind and captured them, despite the big fight they put up.

On the following day the other three lads had been kidnapped in a somewhat similar manner when they were up on the moor searching for their lost chums.

Since then the only sign of life they had seen from outside their prison was when a stone in the roof was lifted and food and water were lowered by a masked man, who was too high for them to reach.

As far as they knew, none of the prisoners had any enemies who they thought would have gone to such lengths, and the whole affair was an utter mystery to them.

They had counted the days, and when Saturday came they wondered constantly how the first team—had gone on with six of its regular members missing. As will be remembered, however, the much-weakened side had made an heroic fight, and had actually managed to draw in an away match.

Most people in Tynecastle were as mystified as the prisoners. The police had been hard at work on the case, but had obtained no clues whatever, and hundreds of amateur detectives had failed, too.

Tom Armstrong and Terry Flanagan, however, had their suspicions, but they kept them to themselves. Though they had no clues to go on, they had begun to believe that at the back of the strange mystery were the eleven ex-convicts who had been signed on by the Rovers to form a side to play in the County Combination, a small professional league.

Mr. Falconer, the chairman of the Rovers, was chiefly responsible for signing on these men, and he had done so partly in order to give them a fresh start in life.

His job now is to follow Bert Brown and his ex-convict lot," said Tom, "and see if it leads us on the trail of our chaps."

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In the midst of all the noise and fun, William and the boys hopped about excitedly.

"We'll watch 'em at the ground, too," Terry said. "Their great idea was to have the free use of the ground, and now some of them have been put into the reserves they can be there as often as they please."

During the week-end nothing happened to help on the explanation of the mystery, and on Monday evening Brown and some of the ex-convicts were at work in the gymnasium. They finished before the other players, however, and wishing their comrades good-night, they went along to change.

"That's queer!" said Tom. "I thought they would try to stay on when no one else was here, so that they could continue to search for whatever it is they are looking for." Tom and Terry had discovered that the ex-convicts were seeking something in the ground, though the two Rovers had no idea what it could be.

"Tell you what," said Terry. "I'll nip along quietly, and see if this bunch actually do leave the ground." "That's an idea!" exclaimed Tom. "I'll wait here for you."

The work in the gymnasium was gone on with, Tom glancing from time to time at the doorway, watching for Terry to come back, and at length the training ended.

Instantly Tom hurried along to the dressing-rooms, to find them empty. A quick search revealed the fact that Terry's clothes were missing, and an anxious expression came into Tom's eyes.

"I hope he hasn't trailed them on his own," he said under his breath, "and then he'll be in a bit of a fix."

Presently the Rovers were dressed, and they went from the ground. After the buildings and the gates were locked.

"The mascots aren't here, either," murmured Tom, thinking of Uncle Joe, the well-educated parrot, and William, the almost-human monkey.

He hurried to the stables, he shared with Terry, hoping to find his chum there, or to discover a message from him, but Mrs. Wilson, their landlady, said Terry had not returned.

Tom was feeling very worried now, and he wished that he had not agreed so readily to his chum's proposal. "But I didn't think anything could happen at the ground," he murmured.

Presently he left the house, and in the street he stood hesitating, wondering what to do, when suddenly he heard a familiar voice.

"One more bash on the back from you, Billyum, and I'm goin' to call a copper," said Uncle Joe.

Tom ran to meet the mascots, hoping to find Terry with them, but the Irish lad was not there.

"Allo, mate!" said Joe. "The mean microbes wouldn't give us a ride!"

"What's that, uncle?" cried Tom. "What do you mean?"

"Keep your old car, that's what I says to 'em," went on the well-educated parrot. "Terry ain't 'alf a mite leavin' us on our ownseems."

"Oh, if only you could talk!" cried Tom, feeling sure that something had happened to Terry, and that the mascots knew what it was.

"Yes, you poor chump," said Joe to William. "You can't talk, you 'ard-baked 'addock."

William could do something else, and he did it to Joe's head, though Tom quickly checked him.

"Where is Terry?" he cried. "Find Terry, uncle!"

It was only a faint hope, of course, and it brought no good result, for Joe had no idea where to find the Irish lad.

He continued to talk, however, in a somewhat disjointed manner, and his remarks led Tom to believe that Terry had gone somewhere in a car.

"Perhaps it's all right and I'm worrying for no reason," he murmured.

"Come on, Bill," said uncle, "let's go in and get a drop of supper!" Tom did not follow them. In his worried state of mind he felt he must keep on the move, and he went back to the ground, to find it locked up for the night.

As he stood there, glancing this way and that, he suddenly thought he heard the sound of whispered voices coming from within the enclosure, and he turned to the gate, listening intently.

Several minutes passed by, but the sound was not repeated, and he began to think that he must have imagined it.

"I'll get along home," he muttered. "Perhaps Terry is back by now."

Eleven o'clock chimed as he reached his lodgings, where a swift search revealed the missing coat, asleep, one of Bill's feet resting on uncle's neck, but Terry was not indoors.

Tom hesitated no longer, but ran most of the way to the police station, where he saw the inspector and told him what had happened.

"I believe he's gone, like the others," the man said.

The inspector took the matter up at once, telling Tom to go home to bed. The lad obeyed, but it was a long time before he fell asleep, and when he woke in the morning Terry was still missing.

Quickly Tom went to the police station, to hear that his chum had not been found.

"By gum!" he cried. "What are the police doing? Here's seven lads been carried away, and you've done nothing to help."

The Fifth of November.

"ASY, Tom," said the inspector, making allowances for the boy's ignorance of the strong affection between the two chums, "we're not being quite so idle as you seem to think. As a matter of fact, we're following up a hot clue. Just take it easy for a day or so, and then I hope all will be well."

A little comforted, Tom returned home to be met by two hideous masks which almost hid William and uncle.

"It's the Fifth!" he muttered. "I'd quite forgot!"

"Yes, mate, and we're goin' forth," said uncle. "We ain't 'alf goin' to 'ave a beano with some of our mates."

Tom sighed, wishing he could say something similar, but until Terry came back he thought he would never have another happy moment.

The day seemed to pass very slowly, bringing no news of the missing lads, and then the long evening commenced, and cracks and bangs began to be heard all over the place.

After trying to eat a high tea, but making a very poor job of it, Tom thought he would go to the Cosy Corner, the little tea-shop kept by his sweetheart, Elsie Alison.

As he went along one of the principal streets of Tynecastle, he heard sounds of uproar at the other end, where the traffic appeared to be getting into a muddle.

Quickly Tom reached the corner, in time to see a policeman holding up three lines of traffic in order to allow a party of boys to march along, carrying a large guy in their midst.

Seated at the foot of the figure, smoking two cigarettes and wearing his top-hat and best clothes, was William.

"Where's uncle?" murmured Tom, and very quickly found out.

"Hurry along, there, you boys!" ordered the police.

"Terry, yourself, mate! Not so much of it!" the guy seemed to say.

"What's that?" demanded the constable, striding up to the figure, thinking that there was a boy inside.

"Out of it!" He thrust his hand into the guy's body, but found it stuffed with straw, at which he stared in surprise.

"Stop 'rippin' me, mate!" came the voice from the guy.

The surprised policeman started up, to see Uncle Joe peering out from the side of the grotesque mask.

"You leave my guy alone!" said uncle. "Ere, Bill, the copper keeps on punchin' our guy. Punch 'im, Bill!"

Off came William's top-hat and coat, and as he flung away his cigarettes, he bounded down in front of the policeman, brandishing his fists.

"Two to one on old Billyum!" shouted Joe. "That's the idea, boys!"

"Get on the move!" ordered the policeman, gazing anxiously at the rapidly lengthening streams of cars all around. "Hurry along, boys!"

Bang! Crack! Swish! Bang! The fireworks show had suddenly commenced right in the centre of the busiest part of Tynecastle, for when William had flung his cigarettes away one had dropped into a box that was resting at the back of the guy.

This box contained the fireworks, and one had been ignited by the burning cigarette, and that one set the others off.

In a few moments there was a remarkable scene at that busy crossing. Jumping crackers bumped out from the box, and jumped and banged all around the policeman, rockets whizzed across in front of his nose, Roman candles shot coloured balls at him, golden rains

rang out glittering streams, squibs, Chinese crackers, and cannon crackers exploded in volleys, a jack-in-the-box cracked like mad, pyramids and fountains flung cascades of golden and silver sparks into the air, and coloured lights threw vivid blue, crimson, and green glares over the scene.

In the midst of it all the policeman, William, and the boys hopped about excitedly, falling over each other, and shouting loudly, whilst at

the top of the guy Uncle Joe loudly warbled the Fifth of November song.

Then, to crown it all, the guy suddenly caught alight, and the boys, William, and the policeman fled awestruck from it, uncle staying on top until the heat forced him to quit.

A number of police hurried on to the scene, and a huge crowd collected, whilst cars and other vehicles waited in their hundreds, the drivers adding to the heat by their blistering remarks.

It will be a long time before Tynecastle forgets that Fifth of November, though uncle and William thought it was the best show they had ever attended.

Of course, the police wanted to blame someone, but they hardly knew who to start on, and they allowed the matter to drop.

Meanwhile, Terry Flanagan had joined the other Rovers in the dungeon under the old castle, and he did not know how he had got there. All he knew was that he had left the ground, following the ex-convicts, when suddenly he had received a heavy blow from behind, and when he came to he was bound and gagged in a fast-moving car.

Finally, he had been lowered through the opening in the dungeon roof, and then the other prisoners had cut his bonds.

"Finally, you here, Terry?" asked Charlie Richardson eagerly.

"I don't know," replied the Irish lad. "They were masked."

Even now he could not say that the ex-convicts were to blame, for he had seen those who had been in the ground start away from it, and he had had no chance to see the man who had struck him down from behind.

Night came, bringing no news of his chums to Tom, and after sleeping fitfully for a few hours he went along to the police station again, his face haggard with worry.

"Well!" he said harshly. "Has anything come of that clue?"

To his dismay the inspector shook his head slowly.

"I'm sorry, Tom," he replied. "It looked like putting us on to something good, but it petered out."

For a few moments Tom stood and stared, and then his fists clenched, and he turned away.

"You've done nothing—nothing," he said bitterly. "I'm starting now, and I'm leaving everything till I find my chum."

"What do you intend to do?" asked the inspector.

"Try something you might have tried," replied Tom. "I'd have done it yesterday if you hadn't stopped me."

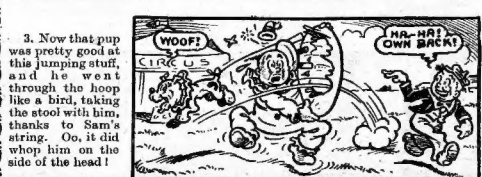
"What is it?"

But Tom was already striding from the police station, and he did not pause to answer. In the street he saw an empty taxi, and he beckoned to the driver.

"Where to, boss?" asked the man.

(To be continued next Monday's COMIC CUTS.)

PUTTING HIM THROUGH IT!





The Whispering Pool.

HERE was a great celebration among the people of the hidden land inside the great belt of sea mountains. Along the shore of the inner sea, bright fires were lit, and before them were piles of fish and sealfish, and, squatting around, the Sea Folk were feasting grandly. Seven days and nights had passed since Sarga the Strong had killed the shark, whizzing the people called Luk, which had threatened the Sea Folk with starvation, because of its fierceness and hunger driving the seal and fish from the Sea Bowl, as this inland sea was called.

But now, Luk, the shark, was dead. Seals and fish had returned in their millions, and there was plenty for the Sea Folk.

But Sarga, the Strong—although it had been he who had saved them from starvation—was not celebrating with them.

He stood apart from the feasting people, upon a lonely strip of shore, with strangely blue eyes, in contrast to the shining dark ones of the Sea Folk, gleaming with some inner excitement, he stared across the placid waters of the Sea Bowl to where, four miles out, the great circular walls of black rock, towering high and smooth towards the skies, formed the impassable barrier between the land of the Sea Folk and the outer world.

And, as he stared, a rapid expression came over his fair, handsome face.

"The Sea Folk say there is no other world than this within the Black Wall," he murmured, with a soft laugh. "But I know that there must be. And this night I am going to swim the Whispering Pool, and seek the Tunnel From Which None Returns. I know there are other lands outside this, and I will fight my way to them!"

He broke off his quiet musing, and swung around sharply as his keen hearing caught the sound of a soft footfall. Over the rocks towards him came the figure of a woman—Raki, his foster-mother, who had taken him from the sea on a night of storm many years ago.

Her face was sad, her dark eyes filled with foreboding as she gazed at her foster-son. Here was one whom the merry feasting of the Sea Folk had not affected.

"Always you gaze out to the Sea Bowl, my son Sarga," she said in a sombre voice. "Is it still your intention to seek the tunnel? Do not answer me with excuses, for I can see that that strong will of yours is determined to carry you through to seek that land on the other side of the Black Rocks."

Her dark eyes gazed into his lovingly. Then she smiled at him.

"You have had permission, in reward for killing Luk, the shark, to go forth and seek your adventures. It is always that that a mother's heart must break while her son leaves her, perhaps never to see—"

Sarga's strong arm went out, and gently he laid his hand on Raki's.

"Hush, my dear foster mother! I am sad at the thought of leaving you, leaving behind me many good friends among the Sea Folk. But there is something stronger even than the love I bear for you which calls me. It is a force which tells me that this is not my real land. That my world lies beyond the grim rocks, there in the Sea Bowl. But I will return—"

Raki laughed gently.

"Maybe my son, maybe."

Her hand went beneath her robe of skins. From a fold she produced a knife, which she handed to Sarga.

"Take this, my son. Let it be your guard against the unknown peril. It is keener than the keenest

knife among the Sea Folk, and it will guard you well!"

Sarga looked at the knife curiously, then heaved a great sigh of admiration. Indeed, as he held it lightly in his hands, it was a beautiful weapon. The hilt was carved in exquisite fashion from a curiously dull black substance, which was light, yet hard as rock. From its base, the blade tapered downward in a slight, narrow curve—a blade with an appearance of greenish glass, yet which had spring and suppleness.

"You cannot break it, Sarga," Raki said seriously. "If you place the blade in a cleft of rock and try to dull its edge, or lean your whole weight on it, it will not lose its keenness, nor will it snap!"

"What is it, Raki?"

"Who knows? It is so many years that it was formed. But legend says that it is made from the fang of a mighty and strange animal, such as we do not see now."

Sarga tucked the knife into his belt. His own he withdrew, looked at it a moment, then gravely handed it to his mother.

"The knife is a good knife," he said. "It was the knife which killed Luk, the shark. Keep it, mother. Let it guard you. And now, I am going! I waited here, for I knew you would come to me. Farewell, Raki!"

"Farewell, my son!"

Raki's voice was quite quiet and calm as she answered Sarga. She folded her arms in his great, muscular arms a moment. Then he gently set her down, and without further word strode down to the edge of the sea.

For long Raki watched him as he waded out, then she saw his great arms flashing in easy, rhythmic strokes as he forged steadily away from the shore of the Sea Bowl.

Thus, quietly, while the rest of the Sea Folk were singing and feasting in his honour, Sarga the Strong made his way out across the Sea Bowl in order to conquer the sea.

Quietly Sarga moved through the water; as quietly and swiftly as Luk, the shark he had conquered. He swam like a fish, his head low down in the gentle swells, he cleaved his way through, leaving behind him only the faintest train of phosphorescent bubbles, which gleamed for a few moments like the Milky Way across the skies, and died away in the darkness of the sea as if a thunder cloud had passed over them.

So, serene and untroubled, joy made Sarga's heart swell within him as he shot through the icy waters. Their coldness could not chill the fire of adventure which burned in his heart; nor the faintest numb the giant strength of his tireless arms and legs, which moved through the dark sea so smoothly.

Overhead the stars gleamed down palely and cold, and away behind him, two miles now, the red fires that were on the shore twinkled like tiny points of a sea's eyes when a blazing torch is held before it suddenly.

After shooting steadily and tirelessly through the sea for three miles, in direct line from the shore, Sarga turned slightly westward, seeking a point under the grim overhanging walls of rock, where lay the dread Whispering Pool.

None had ever ventured within a mile of Whispering Pool save those few hardy souls who, like Sarga, had attempted to find the tunnel through the wall—and these had never returned alive to tell their story.

Whispering Pool was so called because of the curious sound which came from the point where the pool swirled—a whispering, hissing sound,

and sometimes, when the wind was high and swept over the tops even of the great rocks surrounding the Sea Folk's world, strange noises would come from the pool as of a hoarse and husky voice calling.

And now, suddenly, Sarga felt the strong pull of a current striving to swirl him away from the direction of the pool, as if in warning.

But he raised his head above the water and laughed loudly as if in mockery of such force. "No sea, no current, no swirling rapids, was too strong for him to conquer."

He was Sarga—Sarga the Strong! The finest swimmer ever the Sea Folk had ever known—and they themselves rivalled the seals and fish which they hunted.

The strong tide of the running sea washed against Sarga, bubbling



Swiftly through the sea swam Sarga in his search for an underground way out of the strange land and so into the world beyond.

up around his throat and mouth, and splashing into his golden hair as he forged through. He knew, swimming thus, that he was wasting energy, for the broken swells of the choppy surface strove to push him back far, before the force of the current.

So, for a moment, he reared his great chest high out of the water, and drew in a great breath of air. Deep, deep down into his strong lungs he drew in cold, life-giving air; then suddenly snapped tight his mouth, ducked his head, and swooped far down below the choppy, broken surface of the sea.

Silence enveloped him as he curved downwards, full fifteen fathoms deep. Then, when the pressure became too great for the drums of his ears, he allowed himself to rise a little, then struck out faintly.

He kept his eyes open, and here beneath the surface there was more light than there was above. Phosphorus lit his way, and the strange shapes of fish loomed sometimes before him, peering at him strangely from round, unmoving eyes. Sometimes they swirled out of his way in fear; others would come nosing close to him, wondering what strange kind of fish this could be.

All these Sarga ignored. His mind was set on one thing—on finding the tunnel. Ever stronger and stronger the current pressed against him, yet his tremendous strength never faltered nor weakened.

He seemed to slide through the water rather than an eel slides through, without apparent effort, and yet with great speed.

For a quarter-mile he continued thus, then the throbbing in his chest warned him that he could

continue without air no longer. So, swimming his way up, rather than allowing the buoyancy to take him, for fear of losing the distance he had gained, he came to the surface. And as he broke through the top he found that here the sea was rougher than before, and that the waves were curiously swirly, and made sucking grabs at him, as if there were a thousand different eddies and currents striving to pull him in different directions.

So near that it would take but half a dozen strokes to bring him beneath the dark shadow, was one of the flanks of the great circular wall of rock which enclosed the Sea Bowl.

"It must be here that the tunnel is!" Sarga exclaimed to himself, as he hesitated at his position. "Else why should the pool be just in this part. It swirls because of the force of the waters which come rushing in from outside. I will dive downwards, and straight towards the Black Wall."

Once more he pulled himself high out of the water, and gulped deeply of the cold night air. Once, twice, thrice he drew deep breaths, then expelled the air from him. Then, finally, he gasped in a mighty lungful, and, without wasting a moment, plunged his head deep into the waters and kicked out and downward powerfully.

He swooped down low, even past the point where his ear drums began to throb with the pressure of the water, until he was twenty fathoms deep. There were strange flashes of light here in the green twilight, where the troubled waters broke into bubbles with the force of the sea which was pouring into the Sea Bowl from some hidden spot.



Tired with battling against the tremendous force of it, he swam doggedly to one side of the tunnel in order to find a wall on to which he might hang for a moment, to regain his strength. His hand came into contact with its hardness—wet and slippery. He fumbled with his left hand, found a round, smooth knob, on to which he might hang precariously for a little while.

He had no feeling of triumph in having got thus far. He had no feeling at all beyond an overwhelming desire to get out of this hell of evil darkness and swirling, rushing strength. But it did not occur to Sarga to breathe deeply and then rest. Always his head was thrust forwards and onwards.

His left hand gripping the rock, he was about to continue his mighty swim when he heard above the sound of the hissing waters, a strange, sliding noise. He tensed stiffly, allowing his body to be swept out, ribbon-like, by the stream.

The sliding, slipping sound came closer. Then a thrill of sickly horror came to him. He felt something cold and wet fasten to the skin of his arm. A sliding tentacle slithered across his bare shoulder, to fasten with a sucking grip on the hand clinging to the rock.

Sarga shouted—not with fear, but with stark horror. His right hand whipped down to the skin belt, into which was thrust Raki's knife. He whipped it out and hacked swiftly at the tentacle holding him. It dropped away; but two more came in its place.

The water streamed from his face, even there in that coldness, as he hacked at those swift-moving, drawing tentacles. He was in the clutches of Sken, the devil-fish! And again the tentacles came out. Again a mighty monster, judging from the thickness of its tentacles and the strength of its pull.

Just for one blind moment panic took Sarga. It weakened his stout heart. Before him gleamed a solitary pale eye and a fleshy, hooked beak as Sken arose from the deep waters to pull his victim down. Tentacle after tentacle wrapped around Sarga. And then panic left him, and he took in a deep breath and prepared to fight for his life against the mightiest and most evil of all the dangerous underwater creatures.

(To be continued next Monday's COMIC CUTS.)

He had found the tunnel! Without thought of fear, without hesitation, he plunged through. And now the rush of water against him was like a solid force—no longer chopping and pulling at him in little tugs, but striving to sweep him back.

He could not open his eyes against its fury. Even his huge strength was taxed to its utmost, to send him forging slowly through. There was no need for him to keep his eyes open, for the green twilight of the phosphorescence had disappeared, and here was nothing but inky

darkness, and a great coldness and solitude.

Sarga set his jaw strongly, and lowered his head so that it was level with the rest of his straight body, until his head became a shape he knew as stream-lined, and he forged slowly through the wall of shooting water like an arrow.

Where before he covered ten yards in a second, now it took him as much time to cover one. But he did not falter, nor did weakness slacken his stroke. He plunged forward and onward grimly, battling mightily.

He could hear his heart pounding in his ears above the hissing waters sweeping by him; he could feel the blood of his chest thrumming under the mighty strain. He knew his breath could last him but ten seconds longer; then his lungs must burst under the strain, unless he found air.

He ploughed forward another ten yards, then allowed himself to shoot towards the surface. He broke through, reached the roof of the tunnel, then he must surely die, as all the others had done; but if the Sea God were looking after him, then there might be sufficient air in the tunnel.

His head broke surface. He knew an instant not of fear—for such a quality was unknown to him—but of wonderment—wondering if his head were to crash only in a moment, he gasped—and air rushed into his tortured lungs.

It was as if new life flowed into him. The air was cold and stale, without the freshness of the outside; but it had life-giving oxygen, grateful to his strained lungs.

He gulped it in. He could see nothing. The tunnel was as black as pitch. Always only in occasional spots by splashes of white, where water broke over a jag of rock. He could hear nothing save the boom of the water streaming through with colossal speed.

Tired with battling against the tremendous force of it, he swam doggedly to one side of the tunnel in order to find a wall on to which he might hang for a moment, to regain his strength. His hand came into contact with its hardness—wet and slippery. He fumbled with his left hand, found a round, smooth knob, on to which he might hang precariously for a little while.

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(To be continued next Monday's COMIC CUTS.)

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PLUM AND DUFF

THE BOYS OF THE BOLD BRIGADE



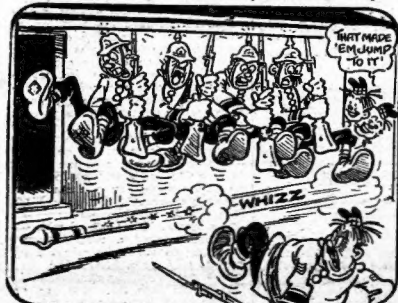
1. It was the fine Firework Fifth, but not very fine for Plum and Duff, 'cos old Sergy scooped up their collection of squibs and rockets and so forth. "None of these here, my lads," he tottled. "You might knock the paint off the camp."



2. And highly pleased with his seventeen alone self for what he'd done, Suet gave himself a pat on the back, and forming fours he marched off to drill the troops. "Aha! Exit the villain of the piece," piped Plum. "What about it, chum?"



3. And grabbing up a rocket of the large ninopenny kind, the comical lads cruised round to where Sergy was doing his stuff with the other Bold Brigadiers. "Now then!" he bellowed. "When I give the word, jump to it! Wait for it! Wait for it!"



4. But the troops refused to wait, for Plum and Duff let loose the rocket and made them rise to the occasion before Sergy gave the order. "Too-hoo! There's an uprising in the army-to-day," tittered Duff. "And it's not 'leap year either!"



5. But there were some good points about the gallant lads of the awkward squad, and these same points kept them mused in suspense when they stuck in the wooden roof above. "They are hanging around all right, touch wood," cackled Plum.



6. Then up galloped Colonel Bogey, the big chief and head big noise of the brigade. And he rushed up in a hurry and a nasty temper too! "How dare you put my army up to such silly stunts!" he barked to Suet. "You go and do sentry-go!"



7. Thus was old Three-stripes handed a job of work to do, but, as usual, he didn't think it mattered. "It's too much fog," he sniffed. "I'll have a fog instead." And he lit up, while the larky lads swapped another rocket for the rifle-bayonet.



8. However, old Bogey appeared in the offing, lightly tripping on his way with all the grace of an elephant hopping from twig to twig of a peanut bush. "Corks! The b-guy-man!" gasped Suet. "I must pass out a salute to the old warrior!"



9. And not noticing that his match had set fire to the rocket in the rifle, Suet presented arms in the style approved of by the big guns of the army. "Pass friend and all's well," he chirped. "This way out of the camp. First on the left, sir!"



10. Then Sergy got badly left. Yes, the rocket and the rifle departed on an aerial trip, and left him empty-handed. "Ah! Caught you red-handed without a rifle, have I?" snorted the colonel. "Where's your gun, my man? Speak! Answer me!"



11. And by way of an answer, the rifle came down again and caught the old coughdrop a nice fourpenny wallop on the summit. "There's the rifle, sir!" chirped the kids. "See it!" "Corks!" wailed Suet. "It's made its presence felt!"



12. And the result of it was that Bogey got an outside in headaches, and Suet got seven days in the cells. He deserved more, but the colonel promised to let him out for next week if he was a good boy. Still, he made a good guy for the lads!